

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-15 (Cancelled)

16. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering which is installed in a steering shaft of a vehicle and in which a male shaft and a female shaft are fitted to each other to be capable of transmitting torque therebetween and moving in an axial direction, characterized in that:

at least one first pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on an outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and an inner peripheral surface of said female shaft so as to face each other with at least one spherical body, radially biased by a spring, interposed therebetween; and

for at least one said first pair of grooves, a corresponding projection is formed on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft so as to be axially juxtaposed to the corresponding groove formed on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and so as to be fitted, through a

gap, in the corresponding groove formed on the inner peripheral surface of said female shaft.

17. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering according to Claim 16, wherein at least one second pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and an inner peripheral surface of said female shaft so as to face each other with at least one columnar body being interposed therebetween, said second pair of grooves being adjacent in a circumferential direction to at least one said first pair of grooves.

18. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering according to Claim 16, wherein one said projection is provided for each said first pair of grooves.

19. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering according to Claim 16, wherein said female shaft comprises at an end thereof a deformation portion which is deformed inwardly.

20. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering which is installed in a steering shaft of a vehicle and in which a

male shaft and a female shaft are fitted to each other to be capable of transmitting torque therebetween and moving in an axial direction, characterized in that:

at least one first pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on an outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and an inner peripheral surface of said female shaft so as to face each other with at least one torque transmitting member interposed therebetween, said one torque transmitting member, for at least one said first pair of grooves, being a spherical body biased radially by a spring; and

for at least one said first pair of grooves, a corresponding projection is formed on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft so as to be axially juxtaposed to the corresponding groove formed on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and so as to be fitted, through a gap, in the corresponding groove formed on the inner peripheral surface of said female shaft.

21. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering according to Claim 20, wherein one said projection is provided for each said first pair of grooves.

22. (New) A telescopic shaft for vehicle steering according to Claim 20, wherein said female shaft comprises at an end thereof a deformation portion which is deformed inwardly.